

# EXHIBIT X

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

## New Trump demand to colleges: Name protesters — and their nationalities

The demand for student information came after the administration promised to deport non-citizens who participated in what it called “pro-jihadist protests.”

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By [Laura Meckler](#)

When federal civil rights attorneys launched investigations in February into whether universities properly responded to antisemitism on campuses, they noticed something unusual about the marching orders from their bosses at the Education Department.

An early step in civil rights investigations is always a letter to the university demanding certain information. Typically, the department asks how many discrimination complaints were received and what school officials did in response.

But the Trump administration told the attorneys working on the cases to also collect the names and nationalities of students who might have harassed Jewish students or faculty, according to documents and three attorneys with the Office for Civil Rights who have direct knowledge of the situation and who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the cases publicly.

The attorneys said they immediately wondered whether the list was meant as a tip sheet that the administration might use to target or deport foreign students who participated in protests.

“My first thought was, ‘This is a witch hunt,’” one attorney said.

Asked why the department was asking for the data and whether it related to immigration, Craig Trainor, the Education Department’s acting assistant secretary for civil rights, replied that the information was necessary to assess how the universities handled the antisemitism cases. His statement did not directly address the question of deportations.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has signaled his administration’s intent to aggressively investigate universities for their handling of campus antisemitism. Trump has argued that pro-Palestinian protests have repeatedly morphed into antisemitism that infringed on the rights of Jewish students, and that neither universities nor the Biden administration took it seriously.

The request for student names is only one way in which the Trump administration is breaking with precedent in investigating these cases.

On March 3, the administration announced it was investigating Columbia University and, four days later, canceled \$400 million in grants and contracts with the school. It then demanded significant changes from the university before it would even discuss restoring the money — many of which Columbia agreed to Friday.

In the past, by contrast, the government would close an investigation after the school agreed to implement usually modest policy changes and perhaps allowed federal officials to monitor future actions, according to people who have worked at the agency. The department would try to levy financial penalties only if universities refused to reach or abide by an agreement, which rarely happened.

In a March 7 memo to the Office for Civil Rights enforcement staff obtained by The Washington Post, Trainor made clear that the office's top priority would be antisemitism investigations and that the department would begin insisting on more sweeping agreements with schools to close investigations.

The agreements "will no longer serve as an avenue in which institutions can avoid accountability by negotiating toothless reform proposals or reciting empty platitudes," he wrote.

Three days later, the Education Department sent warning letters to almost 60 other universities, saying they, too, may face sanctions for failing to protect the civil rights of Jewish students.

Around the same time, the administration moved to deport several students involved in pro-Palestinian protests — including one activist from Columbia University who has a green card — even though these protesters have not been convicted of any crimes. Administration officials say they advocated for Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, and for violence.

The Education Department's demand for the names and ethnicities of students followed a Feb. 3 notice that the agency's Office for Civil Rights planned to investigate five universities "where widespread antisemitic harassment has been reported." They were Columbia University, Northwestern University, Portland State University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

Investigations such as this begin with federal civil rights attorneys sending the universities a list of questions and data requests. One of the letters, for instance, began by asking for basic information, such as a list of policies and practices outlining how the school investigates complaints; reports and complaints of alleged antisemitic discrimination; and actions in response to each complaint.

But the demand for information also included a broad request for the names of students potentially involved in harassment of Jews on campus. This request was not limited to people convicted of crimes or those found to have violated university policies.

The request asked for a list of all students that the university notified of potential violations of the code of conduct or who were referred for suspension, suspended, expelled and/or referred to law enforcement for harassment of, or violence toward, students and faculty “on the basis of their Jewish ancestry.” The request covered the last academic year and the current one.

It also demanded these students’ “national origin/ethnicity/shared ancestry,” in addition to other details about how their cases were handled.

It is unclear whether the universities provided the students’ names or information on their ethnicities. Spokespeople for the five universities involved declined to comment.

The job of the Office for Civil Rights is to investigate whether schools properly handled complaints of discrimination and harassment. Its role does not include disciplining students who may have been responsible for the harassment, so the government does not normally request their names — much less their nationalities.

A second attorney familiar with the process said, “There is no investigative reason for us to be asking for that information.” This person added that making the request might be a violation of civil rights law.

“There is no doubt that it can be used improperly,” a third attorney said.

Trainor, the acting assistant secretary for civil rights, said in his statement that there were legitimate reasons for collecting the information.

“President Trump has made clear that this administration will not allow educational entities receiving federal funding to violate federal antidiscrimination laws,” he said. “Inconsistent application of disciplinary policies based on national origin could be a violation of the Civil Rights Act. This information is therefore necessary to investigate compliance with Title VI.”

The attorneys said that Trainor’s explanation did not make sense to them because an investigation focused on whether protesters were consistently disciplined would have asked for other information as well. Also, it was not clear why, in that situation, the office would ask for student names.

The request comes as the Trump administration works to amp up deportations of those in the country illegally. On Saturday, The Post reported that the IRS is nearing an agreement to allow immigration officials to use tax data to confirm the names and addresses of people suspected of being in the country illegally.

Trump first issued his deportation threat against protesters during the 2024 presidential campaign and repeated it after taking office. On Jan. 29, an executive order vowed to take campus antisemitism more seriously. A White House fact sheet that day promised to deport noncitizens who have joined in “pro-jihadist protests” and to cancel student visas of all sympathizers of Hamas, the militant group that attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Then, in early March, immigration agents arrested a Columbia University Palestinian activist, and even though he is a legal permanent resident with a green card, he faces deportation. Trump celebrated it as “the first arrest of many to come.”

A few days later, two more Columbia protesters were targeted. One had her visa revoked and left the country soon after; the second had an expired visa and was arrested.

Private-sector attorneys with experience in federal civil rights investigations said they were surprised by the request from the Education Department and suggested that universities that comply could be violating student privacy and other laws.

“This is unusual,” said Jack Sharman, an attorney in Birmingham, Alabama, who has represented universities in civil rights investigations. “If I were representing the institution, my first response would be, ‘I’m happy to give you all that information at the gross level — how many cases were brought, what were the outcomes, how many referred to law enforcement. But with regard to the specifics of the individuals, the burden is on you to tell me why that’s needed.’”

Bridget A. Blinn-Spears, an attorney in Raleigh, North Carolina, who also represents universities, suggested that the purpose for collecting names relates to immigration or national security enforcement.

“The only reason that they would need names is if they intend to look into those names and do something with them or maybe put them on a watch list for other future enforcement,” she said. “If you’re collecting names, you’re going to want to use them for something down the road.”

### What readers are saying

The comments express strong opposition to the Trump administration's demand for universities to provide the names and nationalities of students involved in protests. Many commenters draw parallels to historical authoritarian regimes, such as Nazi Germany and McCarthyism, and view... [Show more](#)

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